which supports a genuine bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan to resolve all matters between the two countries. The European Commission's paper was considered by the European Union's Council of Ministers at its meeting on 28 November, 1994. The Council adopted its own paper entitled "Asia Strategy of the European Union" which does not contain any reference to Kashmir as a regional dispute.

U.N. Peace Keeping Operation

2202. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India made a strong plea at the recent U.N. General Assembly Session that the United Nations peace keeping operations which have outlived their mandate including the UNMOGIP should be withdrawn; and

(b) if so, in what precise terms such plea was made and in what context?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) In a statement made in the Special Political and Decolonisation Committee of the current UN General Assembly under the agenda item on "Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peace Keeping Operation in all their aspects". The Indian delegate stated that there should be no hesitation in ending those operations which have been overtaken by events or become inconsistent with their mandates.

Abduction of Indian Fisherman by Pakistan Maritime Agency

2203. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Pakistani steamer intruded into the Indian territorial waters of Okha Port in Kutch District of Gujarat on November 8, 1994 and the Pakistani Maritime Agency (PMA) abducted about 70 Indian fishermen alongwith their 10 fishing boats,

(b) whether it is also a fact that when the PMA were taking the Indian fishermen towards Pakistan the latter cut the ropes, ran to the shore and swam back to the country;

(c) if so, the details in this regard;

(d) whether Government have lodged any protest with the Government of Pakistan for intrusion of the Pakistani Steamer into the Indian territorial waters and abduction Indian fishermen along with their boat;

(e) if so, what is Pakistan's reaction in this regard; and

(f) what is the number of Indian fishermen who have been abducted and at present kept in Pakistani jails and what steps Government have taken for their release?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (f) No incident of intrusion by a Pakistani steamer into Indian territorial waters occurred on November 8, 1994.

Government have taken up with the Government of Pakistan the various incidents of apprehension of Indian fishermen by Pak authorities in the recent period.

According to information available, there are at present 195 Indian fishermen in Pak custody. Government are making sustained efforts to seek the release of these fishermen. The modalities in this regard are being worked out through diplomatic channels.

UN Observer Group to Leave the L.A.C.

2204. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are seriously considering a proposal to ask the United Nations observer group stationed at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and Pakistan in Kashmir to leave the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has requested that the strength of UN Observer Group at the LAC should be increased from 35 to atleast 200, if so, what are the reactions of Government thereto;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the Group's report are highly biased and give a one-sided picture of what is happening in the valley; and

(e) if so, what actions have been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Yes, Sir. Government's view is that after the signing of the Simla Agreement, which established the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. UNMOGIP has no role to play, and, therefore, the question of augmenting its strength does not arise.

(d) and (e) UNMOGIP's reports to the UN Secretary General are confidential, but its mandate is only to monitor violations